

Further Information.....

Home and Homestead

Preparedness:

California FireSafe Council

<http://www.firesafecouncil.org/education/insideout/firesafebig.html>

Fire and Forestry

California Forest Stewardship Program:

<http://ceres.ca.gov/foreststeward/index.html>

Controlled Burning

cDF Vegetation Management Program:

<http://www.fire.ca.gov/ResourceManagement/VegetationManagement.asp>

The Southern Humboldt FireSafe Council

The Southern Humboldt FireSafe Council is an informal group of community members working on a variety of projects to prevent the most destructive wildfires and prepare the Southern Humboldt region for the inevitability of fire. We are in a close partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Forestry and The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). We have received grants from the California FireSafe Council/BLM for a 20 acre fuels reduction project in Salmon Creek (completed May 2005), and a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (in progress). We have also received a program development grant from the Humboldt County FireSafe Council (in progress). Our meetings are monthly and we encourage anyone interested in projects in their community or contributing to the FireSafe community at large to attend. For information on any of the topics mentioned in this brochure or to find out more about the SHFSC, please contact us using the information below.

Southern Humboldt FireSafe Council

Phone: Joel Ficklin (707) 845-3282

E-mail: firesafe@shfsc.net

About this brochure: Peter Tittmann

ptittmann@locuscor.net

Web: <http://www.newforestry.org/shfsc/>

Institute For Sustainable Forestry

John Rogers (707) 923-7004

P.O Box 1580, Redway CA 95560

Web: <http://www.newforestry.org/>

Fire Consciousness

If we are to steward our land, there is a need to become acquainted with fire as a valuable tool in creating beautiful, productive, and diverse forests. We must engage with it or we will be consumed by it.



Burning slash from a shaded fuel break.

The initial stage of the relationship with fire can be cutting and burning slash piles in the wet months of the year. Slash fires can provide a welcome warmth and light in the dark and wet months of winter. As our understanding of the usefulness of fire grows, we can begin to plan for controlled burns to maintain the work we begin with chainsaws. It is important to keep in mind that we live in a fire-adapted ecosystem. A walk through an old growth redwood grove says a lot about this by the frequency of fire scars.



Fire for Forests

By managing the forest to be fire tolerant we are also managing for a productive forest. The North Coast is an extremely productive timber region. By preparing the forest for fire we are also creating a forest structure in which trees can grow faster and produce lumber of a higher quality. If we take an active role in stewarding the land we can ensure that our regional, sustainable forest product economy can become a reality. The industrial timber harvest practices of the last 50 years are ceasing to be viable, and we have a responsibility to our community and to our bioregion to foster new, sustainable relationship with the landscape.

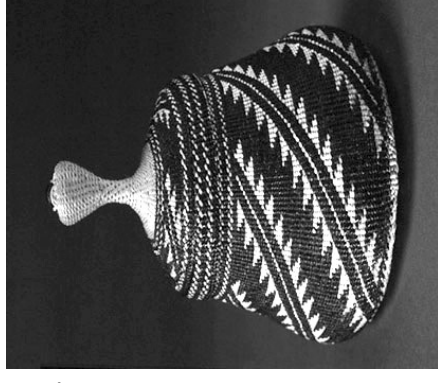
Lessons From Those Who Came Before

The North Coast region, as documented by early explorers, was one of the most densely populated in North America. The Wyot, Sinkyone, Mattole, and Yurok Tribes thrived in this region. Though they have been described by anthropologists and historians as hunter-gatherers, it appears that there was a much more active participation in maintaining a landscape which provided the basic needs of everyday life. Fire served as a principal tool in this reciprocal relationship in a few primary ways:

Glenn Moore, Sr., Yurok Tribe Culture Committee

anthropologists and historians as hunter-gatherers, it appears that there was a much more active participation in maintaining a landscape which provided the basic needs of everyday life. Fire served as a principal tool in this reciprocal relationship in a few primary ways:

- keeping prairies open and free of invading conifers
- improving growth and yields of basket materials like hazel sticks and bear grass, food plants, and native grass seeds used for flour
- improving forage for deer and elk
- keeping travel corridors open
- clearing riparian areas of brush to keep streams flowing year round
- fireproofing areas around villages and tan oak groves
- pest management to reduce insects like ticks and to collect edible insects like roasted grasshoppers.



A Yurok Basket

Modern ideas of permaculture and bioregionalism espouse a management ethic that closely parallels that of the Indians. In learning from our predecessors here, we can begin to live more closely with the land and continue to learn from a culture which thrived here for centuries before colonization.

Southern Humboldt FireSafe Council

Fire on the Mountain!

Understanding our relationship with Prometheus' gift



As stewards of the land which will be our legacy, we must come to terms with fire as an elemental force which can cause destruction on a devastating scale or help us to create landscapes that are healthy, fire tolerant and rich with economic and biological niches.

The Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council would like to help you to make the choice to engage with this transformative tool in ways that can protect your home, create productive forests, and restore the biological diversity which is the heritage of the North Coast.



Southern Humboldt FireSafe Council

web: www.shfsc.net

email: firesafe@shfsc.net

phone: 707.845.3282

Creating a Fire Safe Community



Rural roads are common ignition points for wildfires.

In the Southern Humboldt region and across much of the Pacific Northwest the forests are in varying stages of recovery from the last-impact logging operations. It is difficult to extrapolate from the existing information exactly how these forests looked before logging. We do know that until many decades have passed, second growth forests are particularly susceptible to catastrophic fire. With continuous fuels connecting the forest/meadow floor to the high canopy, wildfire can burn with extreme intensity. This can have devastating results for watersheds. Soils can become infertile and erode easily,

among a variety of other impacts. These intense wildfires also pose a ominous threat to rural landowners and homesteaders. Recent fires in the region have reminded us of the inevitability of fire. We hope this brochure can help you prepare!

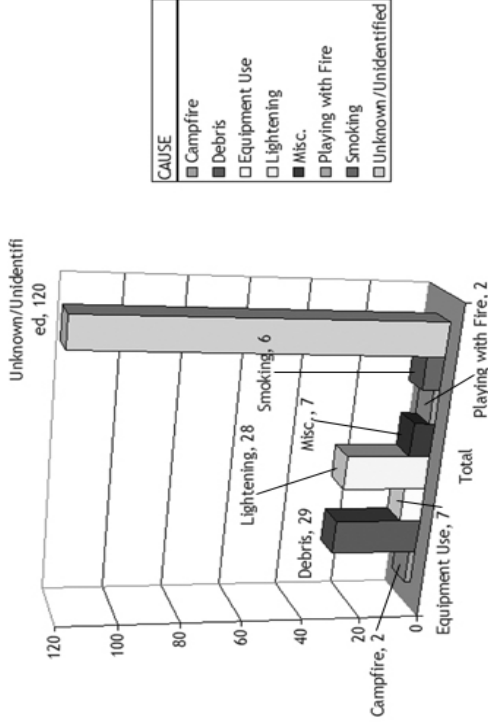


Honeydew Creek Fire, 2003.
Wes Shultz

rural landowners and homesteaders. Recent fires in the region have reminded us of the inevitability of fire. We hope this brochure can help you prepare!

Common Ignition Sources

65% of the recorded wildfires in the last 50 years whose causes are known were ignited by human activity. This statistic gives us a good idea of where we can expect fires to start: roads and homesteads. Though



Southern Humboldt wildfire statistics (source: CDF FRAP)

lightening is a significant, factor we have no way of predicting when or where it might hit. Our efforts should be directed to where we know ignitions are likely and our goals are achievable.

What Can be Done?

There are a number of things landowners can do to protect homes and create landscapes that are fire tolerant. Creating defensible space around structures, using fire resistant building techniques for new structures, and retrofitting older buildings to resist fire can greatly increase the potential that those structures will be defensible in the event of a wildfire. Of equal importance to many landowners is the land which they steward. One resident of Salmon Creek in the aftermath of the Canoe Creek Fire in 2003 summed it up this way, “I was prepared to lose the house but the thought of returning to the land and having it burned out was really scary.”

Modifying the structure of vegetation in the forest can be the deciding factor between a fire that completely devastates the landscape and one which has a restora-

tive effect, clearing out the under story and sparing the larger trees.

Around the Home

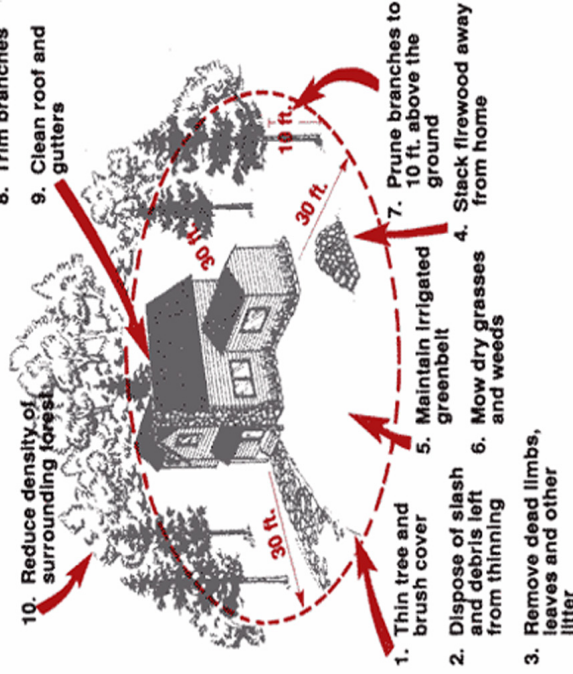
The term “defensible space” is one which may bring to mind the suburban style of landscaping depicted in California Department of Forestry fliers.

Though this type of landscape is ideal for defending the structure, many people choose to live in the forest and appreciate the closeness of trees for shade and aesthetics and thus feel that their homes will



“Burned out” forestland after a severe wildfire.

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES



never be defensible. Actually it is possible to create a defensible landscape that doesn't look like a golf course. By breaking up the canopy and limbing trees, defensible space can be achieved. It's important to give special consideration to trees or branches that lean over houses or structures. There are several simple things that should be considered for the safety of homes and outbuildings:

- Cover your chimney outlet and stove pipe with a non-

flammable screen that has a mesh no larger than 1/2 inch.

- Build or re-roof your home with noncombustible roofing materials. Roof eaves should be boxed or enclosed with fire resistive materials.
- Enclose the underside of balconies and decks with fire resistive materials.

Around the Homestead

Thinning trees and removing limbs and brush along roads, parking areas, and shops/generator

sheds should be a high priority. Fires that start in these areas yet stay on the ground give you and your local Fire Department precious time to respond. Cutting and burning slash piles can be a great way to get exercise in the winter and it's a relatively low cost option. There are several options for maintaining the work



Water sources with appropriate plumbing fixtures are also an extremely important consideration for the fire-aware homesteader. Having a tank or pond that fire responders can use to supply engines can easily save your house and forestland from going up in flames.